

# Wellcome Trust Outline Planning Application S/4329/18/OL GSPC Comments to SCDC

January 2019

## Summary

Great Shelford Parish Council (GSPC) recognises the strategic importance of the project and supports the expansion of this world class scientific facility and job creation it will bring. However, having reviewed the outline planning application, GSPC believes that the development would have a severe negative impact on the local transport infrastructure. This is not an attempt by GSPC to stop the project, rather to ensure that the necessary measures are taken to ensure that the project is a success and does not have a negative impact on local communities. We are convinced that these additional measures do need to be taken.

The impact of the development needs to be considered holistically with other developments – North Uttlesford, Hinxton Grange, Spicers, Agri-Tech, etc. For example, Wellcome have made projections for increases in traffic levels on the A1301 due to their development. However, there are also proposals for 5,000 new houses near Great Chesterford and we are told that it is likely that 80% of the new residents are likely to work in the Cambridge area. It seems obvious that this would result in several thousand additional journeys on the A1301 each day.

GSPC has commented on the proposals under three main headings:

- Housing.
- Rail transport.
- Road transport.

GSPC has not commented on areas such as environment, biodiversity, etc. which would not have a direct impact on the Great Shelford area.

In commenting on rail transport issues, GSPC notes that there appear to be major issues with (non-) delivery by Network Rail (NR), which need to be dealt with by Government. It took NR and its predecessors of the order of forty years to deliver Cambridge North station. There is every sign that a similar delay could occur with Cambridge South unless urgent action is taken.

## Housing

The proposed new housing is to be welcomed, but GSPC believes it is far too little. 1,500 homes means around 1,500 employees will be living on site; therefore 2,800 will be commuting (plus partners, etc.). Crudely, this would equate to  $2,800 \times 2$  journeys in/out of the site by employees and  $1,500 \times 2$  by partners = 8,600 journeys per day. Based on current commuting patterns, this would result in 4,300 additional car traffic movements on the A1301 per day. It suggests that the volume of housing needs to be significantly increased and potentially doubled.

## Rail Transport

Wellcome say that 50% of employees commute into the current site by car. It would seem obvious that significant improvements are required to the rail infrastructure to try to reduce car

usage among the additional employees. This is something of a 'shopping list', but GSPC believes that consideration should be given to all of the following (in priority order):

- Acceleration of build of Cambridge South station.
- Increased use of campus bus service, especially to Whittlesford station.
- Creation of a rail P&R at Whittlesford.
- Increased capacity and improved signalling on the lines into Cambridge.
- There is likely to be significant international travel to/from the site, therefore Stansted airport trains need to call at Whittlesford.
- Construction of a new rail station on the Genome site.

## **Road Transport**

The application states that:

- On the current site one third of employees use the campus bus service, half drive, 10% cycle.
- Projected 24 hour traffic volumes on A1301 increase by 404 vehicles (5.4%) N of A505, 2,446 (27%) S of A505 by 2031.

These projections seem implausibly low. As stated in the Housing section above, we believe there are likely to be of the order of 4,300 additional car traffic movements on the A1301 per day purely due to commuting to/from the site. This takes no account of visitors, deliveries, etc. Also, as discussed in the Summary above, the impact of other developments needs to be factored in. Currently traffic northbound on the A1301 can be backed up beyond Hinxton in the morning peak and, anecdotally, in the evening peak the journey from the Genome site to the A1301/A505 roundabout can take 45 minutes. High additional traffic volumes risk gridlocking the whole area. GSPC suggests the following mitigating actions:

- All access to the new site is via the A1301. Consideration should be given to providing direct access to/from the A11 (which is a dual carriageway) to spread the load.
- Increased use needs to be made of the campus bus service.
- Consideration should be given to throttling demand for car parking space on the campus, perhaps through disincentives such as charging.
- In many ways the proposal effectively turns the A1301 into a private road for the convenience of the campus at the cost of producing an unacceptable backlog of traffic. Consideration should be given to replacing the proposed three roundabouts and signalised pedestrian crossing with bridges. Introduction of a 30mph speed limit on the road will also significantly delay through traffic.
- There is a lack of clarity on what improvements are intended for the A1301/A505 junction. We are already at the stage at which minor tinkering will not be sufficient. More radical solutions such as a flyover/underpass and some element of dualling of the A505 are needed.
- Obviously, disruption to traffic during construction needs to be minimised.

GSPC believes that the A1301 north of Sawston is already loaded beyond capacity, with 16,500 vehicle journeys per 24 hours through Great Shelford (figures derived from GSPC's Westcotec SID). In the morning peak traffic can be backed up from the Addenbrookes relief road into the

centre of Great Shelford (GSPC recognises that the new smart lights have improved matters at the Addenbrookes junction, but the situation is fragile – a small number of additional vehicles will tip things over the edge again). GSPC therefore does not wish to see any improvements to the northern end of the A1301 which would increase the volume of traffic through Stapleford and Great Shelford. There is one exception to this, which is a safety issue. The junction of the A1301 with Granhams Road has seen at least four moderate severity accidents in the last couple of years. Improvements such as road widening/realignment and/or traffic lights are urgently needed, but it is very unlikely that GSPC or CCC will be able to fund them. Addressing the issues here would be of significant benefit to the safety of through traffic and residents. If some funding could be provided through CIL or §106, that would be greatly appreciated.